

UK-wide protocol to support collaboration on the sourcing and supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Our PPE strategy is UK-wide and aims to make sure that frontline workers in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland all have the critical PPE they need to stay protected. The UK Government and devolved administrations are committed to working together to achieve this aim.

The current challenges in the global market for PPE have made procurement more challenging for the UK. The UK Government and Devolved Administrations each receive funding to support their own PPE purchasing and logistics operations and will retain autonomy over their own procurement decisions and accountable to their respective governance arrangements, while also remaining committed to a transparent and equitable collaborative working arrangement within the UK.

The UK Government and Devolved Administrations agree to:

- seek value for money and will seek to minimise competition between the Four Nations on the international market – opting-in to joint procurement where this will secure better-value PPE purchases and sharing learning and intelligence from its own PPE purchasing operations, including generated leads that may benefit the other nations.
- stand ready to collaborate on PPE sourcing and supply, drawing on the support of the established UK Government overseas network.
- collaborate on improving resilience, including building up a stockpile against subsequent waves.
- share information on PPE stock, forward orders and shortage items to enable a UK-wide view of the current stock position and supply priorities to be taken.
- recognise that the UK Government and each Devolved Administration controls its own PPE funding envelope and any stock will be chargeable at a full cost recovery basis.

To operationalise this agreement, we furthermore agree:

1. To share details of PPE inventory and forward orders and delivery schedules on a monthly basis:
 - a. Information will be shared between the UK Government and the devolved administrations concurrently to an agreed copy list and using the templates agreed at the Strategic 4 Nations Board;
 - b. Data will be pulled together by DHSC into a Four Nations report setting out a UK-wide position. This will then be shared with each Devolved Administration and used to provide assurance to the UK Government and Devolved Administrations on the UK-wide position, to brief senior officials and Ministers on the latest position and to inform supply priorities.
2. There will be regular Four Nations strategic and operational meetings. Frequency of meetings will be kept under review.

The scope of this protocol is Health and Social Care only.

It will come into effect when the UK Government and Devolved Administrations have approved it. The protocol will apply for the period of Covid-19 response and at least until the end of the 2020-21 financial year.

The protocol will be kept under review and amended by agreement of all parties.